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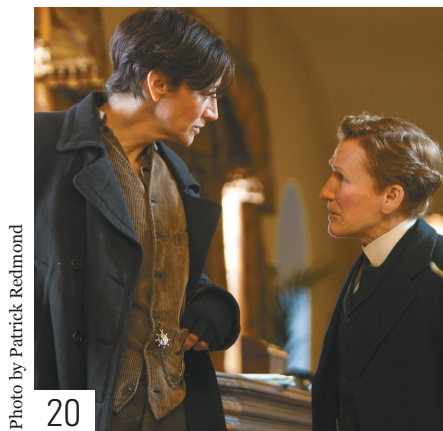


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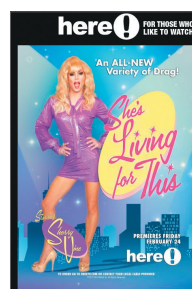
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ON THE COVER

Yigit Pura, pastry chef extraordinaire, will be appearing at the Home & Garden Show. Sweet. Photo by Kasey L. Ross



Small but mighty Milo. Photo by Sarah Ernhart, Sarah Beth Photography



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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671
Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner 612-436-4670
Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672
Editorial Associate Sede Vacante 612-436-4671
Copy Editor Bridget Rocheford-Kearney
Volunteers Kaitlyn E. Walsh, Kathleen Watson
Podmaster Bradley Traynor 612-436-4669
Contributors Meryl Cohn, Scott Endres, Heidi Fellner, Ed Huyck, Justin Jones, Steve Lenius, Ellen Krug, Jennifer Parello, Edward Piechowski & Sean Ryan, Joy Summers, John Townsend, Carla Waldemar, Kaitlyn Walsh, Kathleen Watson, Randy Stern

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690
Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
Account Executive Scott Belcher 612-436-4675
Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672
Advertising Intern Logan Halla 612-436-4697
Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator
 Linda Raines 612-436-4694
Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
National Sales Representative Rivendell Media
 212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678
Creative Assistant Mike Hnida 612-436-4679
Photographer Sophia Hantzes
Cartoonist Rodro
Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.
President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665
Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666
Chief Financial Officer Carolyn Lima 612-436-4664
Administrative Assistant Austin Lindstrom 612-436-4661
Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford
Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010)

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Lavender Media Inc.

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 877-515-9969 **toll free**
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HE'S 48 pounds with the sturdy build of a wrestler. A bow-legged juggernaut. Blonde-haired and blue-eyed. Black eyeliner, nose, and paw pads. He's my little monster, Grendel.

I was celebrating a significant birthday a while back when I got the harebrained idea that I should have a dog. You know, arbitrarily attach a significant choice to a somewhat irrelevant life event? Yeah. It was a rather weak excuse for making the best decision I've ever made.

You see, my brother and I weren't raised with dogs. Other than Titanic, the unsinkable golden newt that I had in third grade, we didn't have pets. Even Titanic met an untimely demise when I left him (her?) in a cereal bowl instead of his tank. He skulked off to somewhere, never to be seen again. I hold out hope that he's a gargantuan creature dwelling in Lake Jennie between Dassel and Hutchinson, turning more into lore than a victim of my failed pet ownership. That would be the hero's ending that Titanic would deserve. I fear that's not the case.

A wayward newt is hardly a case against dog ownership, but I didn't exactly have a stellar track record to build on. Something that I'm sure we could blame on my parents, my older brother got a dog as soon as he hit adulthood, marriage, and nesting. I took on the love and caring for Danny the Dog as part of my *raison d'être*. That big horse of a dog was the cat's meow with me. He was big, fluffy, and Not Mine.

Then, Petfinder.com happened. Bored at work, my friend and I would pass links to profiles of cute dogs back and forth to each other. It started with a puggle (pug and beagle mix) and ended with Grendel.

Grendel is my dear, sweet Glen of Imaal Terrier. I didn't know what that breed was, either, when he came up as a breed possibility for my lifestyle constraints: Lives in apartment in the city without a yard, doesn't jog and won't jog, has family members with allergies, and may subject animal to small children of blood relation. Petfinder.com located the only Glen within states of here at the Mower County Humane Society in Austin, Minnesota. Now, if you're one to put credence in signs, not only was he the only one in reasonable proximity, but his profile said that he's blonde-haired, blue-eyed, hates cats, and doesn't bark. That's my boy.

Okay, I don't hate cats. But, I don't mind that he does.

I brought Grendel home without even knowing how to give a dog a bath—and boy, did he need one. We spent much of that first stretch of time learning how to take care of each other. First, we got really wet as I learned the baptism-by-fire way to give a dog a bath. Then, we figured out the rest of how to live with each other. And, we haven't deviated much from the routine we set that first weekend that he came to live with me in my apartment in Minnetonka. Now, as I'm looking at his fifth anniversary of living with me, I can do our routine in my sleep. And, sometimes I do.

Grendel is my pet. I'm not a pet owner who is referred to in parental terms because I think a pet is even more revered in my world system. He's my perpetual dependent who I am to love and cherish and make comfortable and happy. I don't expect anything of him and he won't develop much past where he already is. People ask me if

I've had him trained and I usually respond somewhat shamefacedly that I have not. I've noticed, though, that we have trained each other. I don't give a darn about whether or not I'm a pack leader, when I say things like, "Move over," he moves to his side of the couch. When I say, "C'mere," he does. When I say, "Wait," I'm pretty sure he hears, "GO!" We're still working out the glitches.

For someone who's never owned a pet, I had no preconceived notions of how pets should be. He's not my work dog; he's too lackadaisical. He's not my hunting dog; I'm still mortified when he killed a squirrel on one of our walks. He's not a playful dog; he never brings anything back when we play "fetch." He is simply my companion.

It's a beautiful relationship.

And, though I don't refer to myself as his parent, I certainly enjoy the irony of being "Grendel's Mother." If you're unfamiliar with the story *Beowulf*, I'll offer up the smallest of spoilers when I say that the real monster in the story isn't Grendel, but his mother...which isn't far from the truth in our lives, either.

You mess with my dog, you mess with me.

He was the best \$50 I've ever spent. Every time I turn on the iPod music, grab the red Kong, fill it with a spoonful of peanut butter and say, "Kennel up," I begin missing him until I can get home again... which is why it's time to sign off now.

It's time to go home.

To this guy.

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Andy □





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Lying With Statistics – Or Whatever’s At Hand

IT’S OBVIOUS bigots and hate-mongers rarely consider what they’re going to say, other than requiring it have the ability to instill fear and loathing for – whatever. Reason, science, facts–Jesus’s teachings–be damned.

It starts young. I recently read a piece quoting a high school student assuring the reader gays were going to hell for flouting Jesus’s teachings. I believe the Bible verses usually cherry-picked to damn homosexuals are plucked from the Old Testament, written centuries before Christ, by non-Christians. Jesus himself never uttered an anti-gay word.

Then we have the adults: Alabama State Senator Shadrack McGill (R), has claimed that low teachers’ salaries are God’s will. Speaking at a prayer breakfast, and reported in the Times-Journal, he argued against raising teacher salaries because “It’s a Biblical principle. If you double a teacher’s pay scale, you’ll attract people who aren’t called to teach.” Besides, low pay for educators offsets the necessary high salaries for politicians, whose inflated salaries, he explained, will prevent bribery. “There needs to be a balance there,” McGill concluded.

Beyond what one McGill can accomplish, skewed thinking in the aggregate creates entities like One Million Moms (OMM). These

ladies are boycotting JC Penney for welcoming Ellen Degeneres as company spokeswoman. Their site states: “Degeneres is not a true representation of the type of families that shop at their store. The majority of JC Penney shoppers will be offended and choose to no longer shop there.” Well-dressed, successful families don’t shop at Penny’s?

Brian Fischer, of the American Family Association, affiliated with OMM, asserted that JC Penney will now be responsible for an increase in breast cancer, depression and suicide ideation among their women shoppers. Fischer’s reasoning stems first from his belief that lesbians qua lesbians suffer a wider spectrum of physical and mental ailments and second, that heterosexual women, by merely entering the now tainted emporia, will be tempted to “try out lesbianism,” and thus fall ill.

How counter willful ignorance and hate? I don’t know, but we’ll be seeing more of it as November approaches. One voice of reason is Degeneres herself who responded, “I stand for honesty, equality, kindness, compassion, treating people the way you want to be treated, and helping those in need. To me, those are traditional values.” ▣

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IN CASE you missed it. Minnesota HF1613, passed in the 2011 Minnesota legislative session, would ask the voters in 2012, “Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Minnesota?”

It was introduced by lead author Rep. Gottwalt and Reps. Torrey Westrom of Elbow Lake, Kurt Daudt of Crown, Mike Benson of Rochester, Mary Kiffmeyer of Big Lake, Matt Dean of Dellwood, Kurt Zellers of Maple Grove, Mary Franson of Alexandria, Glen Gruenhagen of Glencoe, Kathy Lohmer of Lake Elmo, Steve Drazkowski of Mazeppa, Debra Kiel of Crookston, Peggy Scott of Andover, Bruce Anderson of Buffalo Township, Sondra Erickson of Princeton, Chris Swedzinski of Ghent, Bruce Vogel of Willmar and Ron Shimanski of Silver Lake. (Civil Report, April 28, 2011) A companion bill was also passed in the Minnesota Senate, SF 1308; its chief sponsor is Senator Warren Limmer, R-Maple Grove.

If you ask those members of the MN Legislature who voted in favor of placing an amendment to ban same sex marriage on the 2012 ballot in Minnesota, most would say that they do not hate people who are GLBT. Many would likely say that they actually like people who identify as GLBT. Several members might even say, “Some of my closest friends are gay.” Really. Hmm. (“With friends like that....”) These same individuals, while being either clever (in their own minds, I assure you) or simply obtuse, would also say, “This amendment is not discriminatory. Legal marriage is just as available to people who are GLBT as it is to anyone else. They just have to marry someone of the opposite sex.” Again. *Really?*

So, you can drink from this water fountain....you can sit in the front of the bus.... you can be safe from workplace/housing/educational/judicial discrimination....if you just change the color of your skin...or the change the shape of your eyes...or alter the country of your birth. Not quite as absurd a distinction as you might think. An individual who

identifies as GLBT was born that way, just like a person of color was born that way, and neither can do a thing to change that truth.

Such marriages run counter to “the intent of Almighty God,” said the Rev. Tom Parrish, pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Minneapolis (Star Tribune, April 29, 2011). While I can respect Rev. Parrish’ right to his personal opinion, he needs to be reminded that this is not a religious law argument, but rather an argument of the application of civil law. We live in a secular state.

It was reported by Tom Scheck, (MPR News on May 11, 2011), that Sen. Ron Latz, DFL-St. Louis Park, said Republicans are “making a political calculation that the same-sex marriage amendment and other constitutional amendments will drive GOP voters to the polls in a key presidential election next year.”

So, in reality, this whole effort is *not* about protecting the sanctity of marriage, upholding the “intent of Almighty God”, or the promotion of one man-one woman marriage. **Once again, the GLBT community is simply a political scapegoat.** Can anyone spell d-i-s-i-n-g-e-n-u-o-u-s? I mean, my goodness, with the amount of political capitol that the GLBT community seems to provide the Republican Party, you would think they would embrace us with gratitude just for existing!

(A Pew Research Center longitudinal study [2011-2011] of changing attitudes on gay marriage shows that nationally there is a pretty even split, with 46% opposed and 45% in favor of same sex marriage.)

My interest in the marriage amendment argument is not because of the desire to be married. I am not currently in a committed relationship. I haven’t purchased a wedding ring, and I am not planning a trip to the registrar’s office to obtain a marriage license. So, while I am not interested in the physical attainment of a marriage, what I am concerned about is the broader perception of the GLBT community that this proposed amendment symbolizes. Any action that is set forth to *purposefully* place another individual or group in a subordinate position, a position of less value in the eyes of the broader community,

or which, with intent, creates societal barriers to attain an equal prospect, or which is designed to resolutely separate that individual or group from the mainstream of opportunities available to the broader community, is by definition, an act of discrimination. So, the proposed amendment is not about marriage, or protecting the sanctity of marriage. It is not about individuals who identify as GLBT. It is, quite simply, about discrimination.

One group of individuals cannot set forth to subordinate another group of individuals and seek to call their actions by any other name. It is discrimination.

(2011-MAR-10-13: A Washington Post/ABC News poll reported that 53% of American adults supported same-sex marriage; 44% were opposed. This is a margin of 9 percentage points in favor of same sex marriage.)

The GLBT community has been around since time began. (No history lesson here, there isn’t the time or space.) But, it is safe to say that the GLBT community has assimilated into our broader community so very successfully that in many ways we are almost invisible. Most of us move through our daily lives without an immediate distinction as GLBT. In fact, we as a community have been so assimilated for so long that we have become complacent. We allow so much to be done to us. It is this kind of complacency that allows legislators to propose this kind of constitutional amendment...believing that they have the support of a majority of Minnesota citizens.

So, as an individual who is GLBT, or as someone who has a meaningful friendship/family relationship with someone who is GLBT, or who has a valued coworker/colleague who is GLBT, this affects you. And, yes, I know that the vote is still 10 months away, but we cannot allow the discussion to be put on hold until the date draws closer. The discussion needs to continue...it needs to be daily. We cannot be complacent on this. Remember, it’s about discrimination. ◻

David Hancox is Executive Director, Metropolitan Center for Independent Living

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LAVENDER FIRST THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2 @ THE DOWNTOWNER



COMMENTARY | Jessica Annabelle

CECE MCDONALD, a black trans woman, has been facing 2nd degree murder charges since being attacked last summer by a group of white adults.

CeCe's story is a portrait of the United States Criminal Justice System. Her story is what is meant when we are told that transgender people, especially transgender women of color, experience disproportionate rates of police harassment, profiling, and abuse. She is living one of the stories rolled into statistics like: trans people are ten to fifteen times more likely to be incarcerated than *cisgender* (not transgender) people, or nearly half of African American transgender people have spent time in jail or prison.

These statistics are the result of the all of the ways that transgender people, especially transgender people of color, are denied access to the resources and opportunities that we need to live healthy lives free of violence, discrimination, and oppression. Transgender people consistently experience high levels of harassment in school, extreme lev-

els of unemployment due to discrimination and lack of education, denial of competent medical care, inability to change identification documents, and disproportionate violence and harassment. Nevertheless, for generations transgender people, especially transgender women of color, have been at the forefront of movements against police brutality, white supremacy, economic injustice, and for queer liberation and gender self-determination.

CeCe is one of these leaders. She is the everyday hero that is the college student, working her way toward the career of her dreams. She is a femme icon, reminding her many friends and loving community that it's never the wrong time to look fabulous, even as she is unjustly held in jail and awaiting trial for unwarranted charges. She is the center of a growing community of supporters in Minneapolis and nationally, inspiring action and solidarity in our joint struggles to (in her words) "be able to help and comfort someone who is unsure about his or her own

sexual identity and preference...eliminate people's fears of being victims of hate crimes and domestic violence...[and] help someone to accept and be comfortable as whomever they choose to be."

Today, we are faced with the opportunity and the obligation to challenge racism and transphobia. Locally, we have and will continue to support CeCe every step of the way—from ensuring she has access to hormones in jail to packing the courtroom at every one of her hearings. Nationally, an increasing number of support groups and individuals are following CeCe's case and demanding that Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman drop the charges against her. In Minneapolis and the rest of the country we aren't only watching Freeman; we are standing up beside CeCe, a leader in our community, and waiting for him to do the same. ◻

For more information and new developments: <http://supportcece.wordpress.com>

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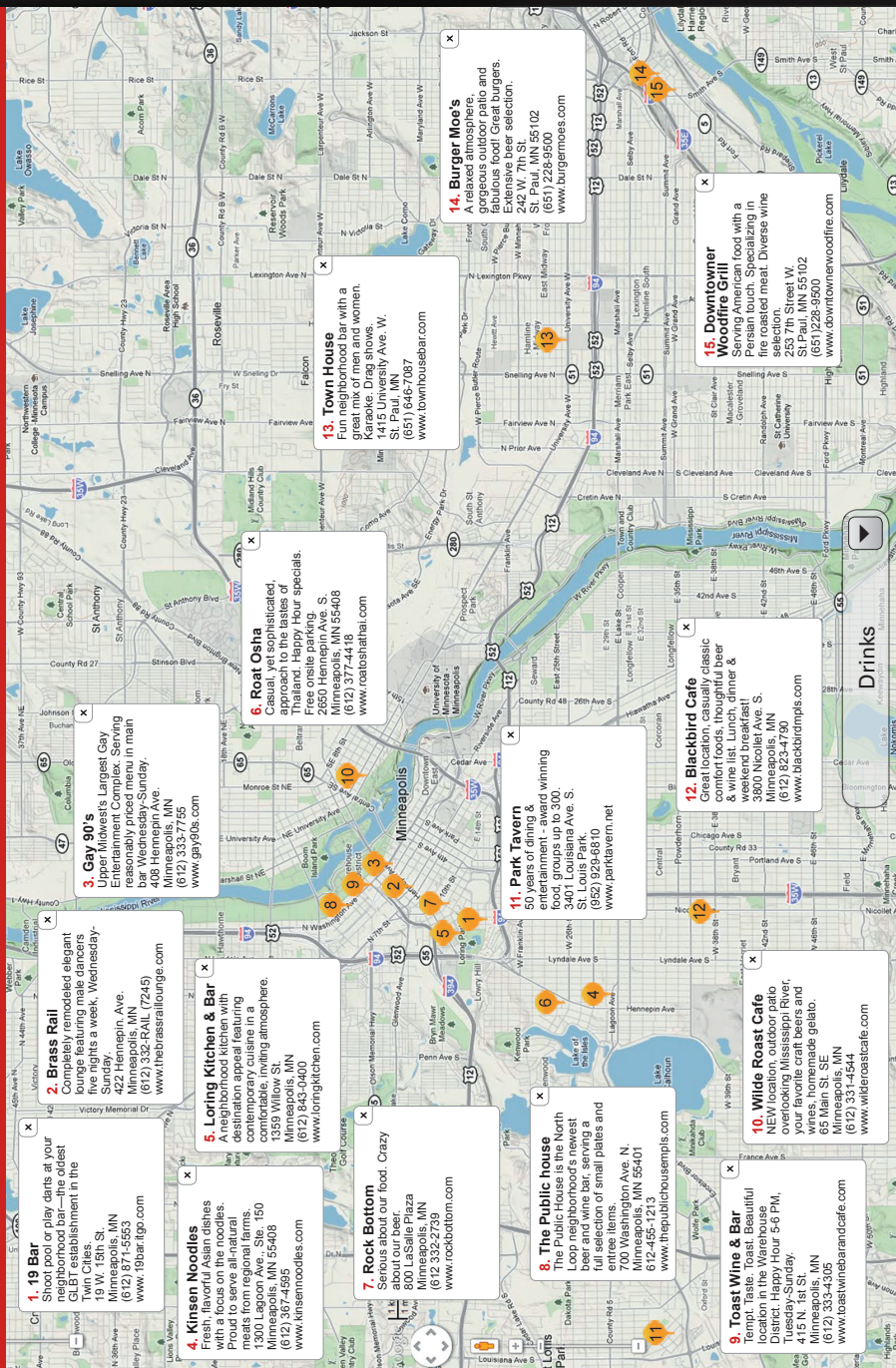
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Janet McTeer And Albert Nobbs

Albert Nobbs is nothing less than a groundbreaking vision about crossgender and lesbian consciousness in 1890s Ireland. It has received richly deserved Oscar nominations for Glenn Close for Best Actress (who also co-wrote the superb screenplay), Janet McTeer for Best Supporting Actress, and Best Makeup (Martial Corneville, Lynn Johnson, and Matthew W. Mungle).

Close plays the title character, a woman living as a male butler in Dublin. His life is jolted when he meets another woman living as a male house painter, Mr. Hubert Page (McTeer). An early sleepover between the two is absolutely hilarious.

Janet McTeer won the Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Comedy/Musical for *Tumbleweeds*, 1999, for which she was also nominated for the Best Actress Oscar. She has also made her mark in well written historical roles that inquire into sex and gender, such as the 1995 film, *Carrington* and the 1990 BBC miniseries, *Portrait of a Marriage*. She can also be currently seen in at the movies in *The Woman in Black* with Daniel Radcliffe.

I recently spoke with McTeer about her marvelous performance in *Albert Nobbs* and the problem of attaching ourselves to labels.

JT: What did you do to transform and get into the role of Mr. Page?

JM: From the inside out I wanted Hubert to be everything that Albert wasn't. I wanted Hubert to be confident, happy, at peace, fulfilled, engaged in the world – not disengaged with the world. I wanted Hubert to be everything that Hubert wanted to be. And so from that standpoint I tried to create all of those things in a character.

Given that that's where I wanted to end up, I thought, well how does a woman get

from being a battered wife to that place? And I created for myself a sort of back story of how that happened, how Hubert the battered wife became Hubert the painter. He would be a very confident kind of guy. He would be a very cheeky kind of guy. I tried to base it on various alpha male types that one has seen around – that kind of broad-chested strong striking kind of character. And that's sort of what I wanted him to be. I got very large boots, quite a lot of padding, and obviously hair and makeup.

JT: And that's the outside in part of it?

JM: Yes.

JT: I was impressed with how this film shows how economic duress plays out in gender identity. Joe (Aaron Johnson), the repairman in love with Helen (Mia Wasikowska), a maid, turns out to be a really shabby individual, but my sympathy stayed with him through much of the film because we see how viciously he was treated by an upper-class man of in an early scene. How one handles one's economic level can bring out the best or the worst.

JM: I think it's very easy to look at the film and say some of that is about sexuality and some of that is about gender. But actually it's just as much about poverty as it is about anything else and what poverty does. Pauline Collins's character turns into this incredibly greedy person, mean person, because she's terrified of being poor.

You also have Brendan Gleeson's character who is incredibly kind and lovely. I think it's sort of postmodern to make a film with such issues and to make a fair-minded stance that some people are just really nice people and some horrible. People are people. And to a certain extent that's what Hubert is. Someone who crosses both genders and both



sexualities and then says, you know what, if you're a really good person, get on with your life. If you want to find somebody to love you, find somebody who deserves you because you're a really nice person.

JT: I first saw you in *Carrington* which boldly challenged assumptions about sexuality, gender, and traditional relationship structures. And you also garnered acclaim as Vita Sackville-West in the acclaimed miniseries *Portrait of a Marriage*. That book was important to many people who were interested in sexual nonconformity. I wonder if we sometimes get too attached to definitions. Some will see Mr. Page and his lady as butch/femme. Some will see Vita Sackville-West as lesbian or bisexual. Do we get too caught up in labels?



Janet McTeer and Glenn Close in *Albert Nobbs*. Photo by Patrick Redmond

JM: We totally do. One of the reasons I love the film so much is that it lives in a time before labels. I *loathe* labels. They put people in boxes. I think they're hateful. To be able to allow everyone to be unique and everyone slightly different is a really lovely thing. I know labels serve a purpose in certain ways and in many ways that's very positive. But as a definition of character I don't think they really do much.

JT: You trained at RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art). That would have given you a rich historical sense implicitly. That sense comes through your work. The 19th and early 20th century gave us many of the templates that we still use in looking at gender and sexuality. Actually from Mary Wollstonecraft at the end of the 18th century to Oscar Wilde in the 1890s and thereafter the

Bloomsbury Group. What are some of your thoughts on that?

JM: I think bizarrely enough, and I know this sounds weird, but I think the Industrial Revolution was the start of everything in many ways. It opened up the possibility of other worlds to everyone. The idea that you could travel somewhere. The idea that newspapers arrived quickly. You found out about the world more. All kinds of things. The world was a very possible place and within that, once you think of any kind of possibility, it opens up the question of other possibilities. And that's why I think personally that that whole time was so rich and wonderful. And I think it was infinitely more creative and rich and wonderful with more possibilities than now. There was so much undiscovered and

now there's so much that is discovered.

JT: *Albert Nobbs* is about that possibility.

JM: Yes. Absolutely. In Europe, in England and Ireland, there was the idea that the class system should break down. This meant that if you were brought up as a maid and your mum was a maid, you were going to be a maid. But if you were lucky you'd marry (upward). The idea that you could think anything beyond that was extraordinary: the idea that you could go to America. The idea that there was anything else other than your very small world of possibilities. And as soon as you start questioning that, you start questioning everything. □

Albert Nobbs
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Sweet and sexy Yigit Pura has come a long way from helping his mother make caramels in Turkey at age four. The openly gay pastry chef and winner of BRAVO's *"Top Chef Just Desserts"* will be at the Minneapolis Home and Garden show on March 1 and 2 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. 29-year-old Pura will share some of his culinary secrets that made him a fan favorite and a highly-acclaimed pastry chef across the country. Indulge in Pura's tantalizing presentation on the Kitchen Stage. Photo by Kasey L. Ross

There is no reason to skip dessert, not in this town. We boast some of the best pastry chefs in the nation right here in our little Twin Cities. One is a James Beard award nominated chef, another is a best-selling author, blogger, rising celebrity chef and the third has diners delighting all over this town (even in the suburb)! ➡



Zoë François of Tilia. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

Zoë François

had a kindly grandmother who snuck her sugar. Sweet unadulterated real candies, the sort of thing that would make a curly haired little sprite vibrate, thrill, and plot the next candy fix. That little girl, who was in attendance at Woodstock (just to solidify that hippie kid cred), grew up and blazed her own trail to culinary school and worked with all the big name chefs in this town before becoming a national best-selling cookbook author.

The commune was in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont doing things like growing their own food, churning butter and making granola. Eventually, they left the commune. While attending college at the University of Vermont she worked as a prep cook and waitress at an area restaurant. Still, she didn't dive into a full time culinary career.

She grew up, found a job in marketing, got married, but her husband noted that her way of dealing with stress was to come home and cook. With his blessing, she applied to and was accepted to the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.

Growing up on a commune doesn't sound like an auspicious start for a pastry chef.

Lucky for us, Zoë François

She loved every second of the experience, as exhausting, grueling and unforgiving as it was. She has described life in the kitchen as a dance where everyone is armed and you're surrounded by flames.

Zoë and her husband had packed up all of their belongings with the intention of driving to a new life in San Francisco. On their way, they stopped in Minneapolis for a visit, and ended up staying. While here, she began working for the D'Amico's. She worked with Andrew Zimmern (now national food celebrity with his *Bizarre Foods* television show) and Steven Brown (of Tilia).

Eventually, she decided to step out of the kitchen to stay home and raise her two boys. Her stay-at-home-mom detail was short-lived as she soon hooked up with co-author Jeff Hertzberg. The way their book partnership began is almost unbelievable.

Hertzberg and François's children had a music class together. As the kids were banging on instruments, they began talking the sticky gluten. Their first book, *Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day* became a sensation. It was the number one bestselling bread cookbook on Amazon.com. A successful partnership it continued with *Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day* and their latest *Artisan Pizza and Flatbreads in Five minutes a Day*.



Continued on page 56

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La Belle Vie

Artistic desserts by Diane Yang of La Belle Vie. Photos by Andy Lien

Diane Yang

fully arranged, astoundingly flavored desserts from the sweet laboratory of Diane Yang. Her creative combinations of sweet and savory with stunningly constructed presentations are always interesting and memorable. Sweet teeth delighted when her creations began to spread and slowly conquer the Minneapolis dessert scene. Her consultations at many of the area's top restaurants have resulted in many a sweet ending.

Yang grew up in Junction City, Wisconsin. A self-described good Hmong girl, they lived on a farm where she learned at an early age how to kill a chick or a pig and make dinner for her five siblings.

Married young, she hadn't meant to get into cooking. Her husband made sushi for Lund's and Byerly's. She remembered being intrigued by the cakes in the bakery department. One day she saw a commercial advertising cooking school and knew what she wanted to do.

La Belle Vie is generally regarded as the pinnacle of fine dining in the Twin Cities. The final taste, the parting remembrance is always art-

After graduation she interned at the IDS Aquavit before going to La Belle Vie and Solera. She settled into a very successful working relationship with Chef Tim McKee, regarded by many as the best chef the Cities has. His appreciation of her need to be committed to her family was important. She's a mother to two children now, a boy and a girl.

Her exquisite desserts are often a combination of expectedly savory, like an olive oil couscous cake beautifully textured and sweet enough to be a cake, served with Earl Grey ice cream. When asked how she comes up with her flavor combinations she shrugged, seemingly genuinely mystified by her own creativity.

She began consulting for Barrio then Smalley's, before assisting with the opening of Soprano's. Next she began working with the people at Crave, the quickly expanding local restaurant group. More jobs came at Bar La Grassa and 112 Eatery, chef-driven restaurants where she could really stretch and put some extraordinary dishes together. Yang enjoys the opportunity to change and grow, while maintaining her roots at her James Beard Award-winning restaurant home. □



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The Salty Tart: Michelle Gayer. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

Michelle Gayer

Judging by the delicate swoop and crest of her buttercream, Michelle Gayer, the James Beard Award nominated pastry chef is in full mastery of her skill. A single bite of her coconut-packed macaroon is enough to have a palate as hardcore as Andrew Zimmern's swooning. He proclaimed it the best sweet he's ever eaten to Food Network viewers. Her butter-domed milk buns, as tender and optimistic as a toddler, are a world-class vehicle for any slider. More than anything, it's obvious after just moments with Gayer, she is one bad-ass chef. Put this woman in a knife-to-knife battle with the likes of Anthony Bourdain and she would likely make the tough man shed a sugar-coated tear, before sending him away with a butter-packed chocolate chip cookie. After having cooked professionally with the likes of Charlie Trotter of the soon-to-close Trotter's and Nancy Silverton of La Brea Bakery, she somehow settled here, in Minneapolis.

After growing up in Northwest Iowa she had her first job in the restaurant industry at the Ok Café. She worked herself all the way up to "salad girl." While other kids were preparing their college entrance es-

says, Gayer realized she'd have to come up with her next step. Knowing she knew a four-year college like Iowa State wasn't her thing, so she packed up and headed to culinary school in the big city, Chicago.

Throughout school she figured she would work the line as a cook. It was when she was doing her externship that she realized that she really dug doing the prep and plating of dessert. Plus, it was infinitely better to leave work smell of cinnamon rather than fish. She was working at a restaurant called Gordon's, which she described as, "My first restaurant where all the cute waiters were gay and all the busboys were sleeping with the waiters, and then the busboys were all drag queens on their night off. I was like, 'I love this city!'"

She landed at Charlie Trotter's by boldly showing up at the back door, resume in hand. Through a bit of luck he agreed to let her stage and she agreed, quaking in her clogs. The pastry chef was leaving to get married. Gayer gritted her teeth and swore she'd become indispensable. It worked, that chef returned only to pack his knives and that was the last they saw of him. She stayed in his kitchen for years, breaking to travel to La Brea Bakery to work with Silverton.

When she was called by a recruiter to assist in opening Franklin Street Bakery, she decided it was a perfect opportunity to try ➡

Continued on page 56



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Buzzer. Photo by Travis Anderson

Buzzer

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(612) 825-0459
www.pillsburyhousetheatre.org

We're not yet a post-racial society where color doesn't matter and only the content of your character does, but we are an interracial society wherein if you cannot get along with racial difference you are probably not helping yourself. But getting along can be a challenge sometimes, even among diverse people who know each other well and who even care about each other. Through what *Buzzer* director Marion McClinton describes as "the intimacy of three friends, playwright Tracey Scott Wilson cuts to the very heart of the matter." A perfect piece to launch socially conscious Pillsbury House Theatre's 20th anniversary.

Buzzer involves an interracial straight couple -Jackson (Namir Smallwood), a black lawyer and Suzy (Sara Richardson), a white schoolteacher- and Jackson's white friend the past, Don (Hugh Kennedy) a former drug addict. When Jackson buys a nice condo in his old neighborhood, various prejudices and stereotypes emerge.

Richardson says that in what for Suzy is a new neighborhood "she definitely does not belong. She has to deal with her growing feelings of discomfort in her new home and how it challenges her perception of who she is and how she thinks. Her problems there are specific to her being a white woman, and would not be the same if she were a man."

Smallwood notes that "for Jackson, race and class are major contributions to who he is and who he is becoming. He is a young black man from a rough neighborhood. However, he used education as an escape. His class has changed as a result of the education but he learns the valuable lesson that all the money and education in the world cannot change who you are."

Class also tugs at Suzy. Richardson observes that "though she grew up in a better neighborhood than Jackson, she went to more average schools and makes not very much money as a public schoolteacher. Their old friend, Don, is of a class her mother would have loved her to date and he is white. I believe that Suzy finds more boundaries for herself than she is expecting to find or that she previously has found and it shakes up her idea of who she is."

Don is fresh out of his seventh rehab stint. Kennedy reflects that "a cycle of bad habits

coupled with his life-of-the-party persona have led him astray over the yers, transporting him to a world devoid of pleasure – just deep dark thoughts and unshakable demons, lifelong resentments and irreversible regret. As he comes up for air he tries to cling tightly to his former friends, Jackson and Suzy, the only ones willing to give him a last chance."



The Lark. Photo Courtesy of Act One, Too, Ltd.

The Lark

Through Mar. 4
Theatre in the Round Players, 245 Cedar Av., Mpls.
(612) 333-3010
www.theatreintheround.org

Joan of Arc looms as one of the most fabled figures of world history. Her legend has captured the imaginations of other legends such as Shakespeare, Shaw, and as Theatre in the Round reminds us, Jean Anouilh and Lillian Hellman whose adaptation of Anouilh's version resonates of the McCarthy Era in which she was blacklisted.

Director Randy Reyes muses "what makes *The Lark* such an enduring classic play is our fascination with this girl, who after hearing heavenly voices proceeded to change the history of a struggling nation. Who is this girl? Did she really talk to angels? How was she able to convince the nation's leaders to believe her? And why did that same nation that she saved, destroy her? These are the questions that *The Lark* explores. And though Anouilh wrote a beautifully theatrical, not completely factual, version of the story, and Lillian Hellman's adaptation is clearly inspired by her trials in the 1950s communist witch hunt in the U.S., it is the story of a girl named Joan that continues to capture the imagination and illuminate the possibilities of the human spirit."

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Picnic on the Battlefield**Mar. 2 – 18****Southern Theater, 1420 Washington
Av. So., Mpls.****(800) 838-3006****www.brownpapertickets.com**

Russian and American aesthetics are at play in Theatre Novi Most's antiwar piece co-directed by Lisa Channer and Vladimir Rovinsky. In a joint statement they say "*Picnic* is a clown-infused show with lots of funny interactions between the characters as they struggle with the absurd 'rules of war'. But ultimately it is about the horrendous ripple effects of war on all of us. The characters are entertaining us tremendously, but they are doing so on top of a nightmare landscape of the battlefield. The play lets enter the dark, tragicomic humor of two 'battlefields': both the public space of World War I trench warfare and also the intimate and insipid battles that rage within our personal intimate relationships with others, particularly family. Perhaps one fuels the other? The characters are walking that tightrope and they are doing their best to keep laughing and playing as they do. They laugh to keep from crying. Soldiers, wherever they are, understand this."

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice.* Photo by Larry Lamb***The Sorcerer's Apprentice*****Through Mar. 4****Open Eye Figure Theatre, 506 E. 24th
St., Mpls.****(612) 874-6338****www.openeyefiguretheatre.org**

Youth, aging, and power are central themes in this new puppet theatrical created by Michael Sommers who intrigues with this comment: "the Sorcerer conjures his final spell, adding the last chapter to his book of knowledge. His long journey on the path to understanding draws to an end. He is ready to pass on to his new Appren-

tice his legacy. Who in our lives becomes our Apprentice? What, after our final spell do we add to our final chapter?"

*T Bone N Weasel.* Photo by Charlie Gorrell***T Bone N Weasel*****Mar. 3 – Mar. 18****Gremlin Theatre, 2400 University Av., St. Paul****(612) 874-9321****www.theatrepro rata.org**

According to director Amber Bjork, this comedy is a mix of light and dark. She says if you see this story of two ex-cons as simply "trying to get a leg up on their luck, it comes off too light. Start off with the lurking themes of prejudice, racism, of ignorance and color-blindness, and it sounds dark. There's really a fine line between how much ugliness you actually choose to see and how far you are willing to go to deal with it. But Jon Klein's script creates this beautiful balance between laughing at human flaws and cringing at them. He does it with ease and truthfulness." Produced by Theatre Pro Rata.

We, the Others**Mar. 9-11****Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts, 528 Hennepin Av., Mpls.****(612) 206-3600****www.thecowlescenter.org**

The Stuart Pimsler Dance and Theater artists engaged in lengthy discussions about difference, exploitation, marginalization, appropriation, stereotype, race, and privilege. The result is a performance at the prestigious Cowles Center. Artistic Co-Director Pimsler says "the research for *We, the Others* began over a year ago, during a month long residency at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, and the creation of a new work called *All of the Others*, for a cast of dance and theater students. This early research explored the ways in which individuals reside on the 'outside' of moments in their lives based on gender, race, and age. In this new company work, notions of marginalization have become more personalized and intimate, looking at expectations relating to 'roles'. *We, the Others* begins with SPDT's signature wit in questioning who from the company is best suited to play the role of one of the missing artistic directors." SPDT's other Artistic Co-Director is Suzanne Costello.

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IT'S GREATER AT THE EQUATOR

I'M STANDING at the Middle of the World.

To clarify, I'm straddling the equator, just 20 miles from Quito, Ecuador, at the so-named museum of phenomena unique to this global belt. At 0 degrees, 0' 0", gravity is absent, so, as our guide demonstrates, water doesn't circle in a drain, and an egg can balance on a pin.

The indigenous Incas were onto all this 1,500 years ago, as confirmed by artifacts such as their sundial—as accurate as my Timex. The museum also reproduces the tribal lifestyles, via huts where women prepared corn liquor and guinea pigs for dinner while their men undertook more physically demanding tasks, such as weaving llama wool, or shrinking their enemies' heads.

At 9,508 feet above sea level, Quito is the second-highest capi-

tol in the world, a fact brought home as we panted our way to an overlook where we gaped at snow-tipped volcanoes in the distance, then lunched aside a volcanic crater, where the food was tip-top, too: our first taste of the nation's mainstay, was loco—potato soup, served with sides of avocado and white cheese. Pork roast was accompanied by another culinary icon, corn: popped kernels, hominy, and a potato cake for good measure.

Back in the palm-lined streets of Quito's Old City, shadows of the Incas lurk everywhere. Their heavy stones became the building blocks of Spanish Conquistadors, who zealously tore down temples, and on their sites erected churches, such as San Francisco of 1534, the oldest in South America. Beneath the Baroque façade shines an extravaganza of gold plate.

Today, its monastery houses the Museum of Sacred Art, showcasing the works of indigenous carvers, who endowed their Virgins with the pink skin of the conquering Spanish. Life-size saints sport fashion-forward robes, eyes heavenward as they balance their golden dinner plate halos.

The Jesuit Church of 1605 is a copy of the Jesuit Church of Rome, dressed in yet more blinding gold. On its plaza, families enjoying a sunny Sunday swirled between ice cream carts and balloon sellers, as a military band performed. Nearby, Casa El Alabado houses a mesmerizing collection of pre-Colonial shaman figures and animal totems.

At the St. Augustin café, itself a cache of painted saints, we feasted on beef-stuffed tamales, then goat stew (yum!) and churrascuro, an overflowing plate of beefsteak topped with fried eggs, rice, and French fries (more is more). A server churned ice cream as we watched, dashing a splash of the flavors du jour—mango, passion fruit—into a copper basin housed in a bed of ice, beating them until they freeze.

From antique cobbles to the fashionable New Quarter: We're off to the Chapel of Man, a museum designed by Ecuador's most illustrious artist, Oswaldo Guayasamin (1914-1989), to house his compelling paintings. His work addresses the treatment of people enslaved by dictators—Conquistadors and beyond—as an homage to hu-

manity. Big, bold, canvases recall Picasso's cubism, the elongation of El Greco, and the war-abhorring Goya.

We dined in equally modern style in Galleria, Ecuador's gourmet shop, on shrimp (Ecuador's prime food export), tilapia and yucca cake. "Modern" is also the byword at the University de las Americas' culinary program, which schools young talent in the country's treasury of historic foods. Even a picky Michelin inspector would be awed by the likes of sea bass with goldenberry sauce and plantain patties, followed by Andean blueberry ice cream, topping plantain cheesecake.

Next, we bump through green valleys along the Pan American Highway to visit Otovata's market, where women with babies strapped to their backs and long, black braids beneath their straw fedoras, sell knitware, ponchos of llama wool, and delicately fashioned silver.

En-route to nearby Peguche, we brake for lunch at Pinsaqui, a resort of lush gardens and roaming horses in an antiques-laden hacienda where Simon Bolivar once slept (and at \$135 a night, you can, too). As servers once again churned ice cream—tree tomato; sweet-sour maranzilla—four brothers serenaded us on drum, flute and strings as prelude to our visit to the workshop of Senor Manchi, who demonstrates the wind instruments he fabricates—pan flutes, mandolins from armadillo shells, rain sticks, and clay ocarinas.

But Cuenca's calling. A half-hour flight lands us in "the Athens of Ecuador," dubbed for its artsy vibe. Diving back in time, we enter La Posada, the oldest house in town, once a hostel for travelling merchants and now the Museum of the Virgin—historic works of local artists, including Mary with raven tresses, and another with a Shirley Temple simper.

San Sebastian Square is a blaze of white stucco erected by the

Conquistadors, who leveled the Inca temple on the site (as usual) to erect their own beguiling church, and the equally enchanting Museum of Modern Art, once a jail, then a rehab center for alcoholic gentry. A few steps further, we inhale the sensory overload of the flower market. Beside it hides a tiny Carmelite chapel, ablaze with votive candles, and a convent where cloistered nuns sell products of their making.

The New Cathedral, begun in 1884 in a rampage of eclectic styles, boasts a look-alike altar of St. Peter's. The Old Cathedral of 1560 across the plaza—Cuenca's first church—served only Spaniards, verboten to the indigenes they'd come to convert. Today

it's a museum of sacred art.

Colonial homes hug interior patios, such as Villa Rosa, today a restaurant serving sugary, cheese-filled empanadas and local trout. We later dined even more rambunctiously at Tiestos, where the specialty is clay-pot cooking. Shrimp disappeared from platters in a Cuenca minute, girding us for tomorrow's immersion in local crafts.

First off was a tour of a factory fashioning the famous Panama hats (so named for the traditional headgear of Ecuadorians building the Panama Canal), then into the countryside to visit guitar-maker Guterros Uygueri (bargains beginning at \$79). We next encounter an 80-year-old jewelry maker who spins silver into delicate filigree. Then, on to the markets at Gualaceo—one a buzzing myriad of crafts, another a goldmine of food stalls where we wolfed down corn pancakes, then juicy bits of roasted pig.

Who wants to go home? No volunteers. Visiting Ecuador is extra-easy because it's in our own time zone, so no jet lag. Another bonus: the currency is U.S. dollars. And because it's on the equator, the climate remains—oh, I'd call it heavenly—year round. For information, contact www.ecuadortrad-enyc.com. □

SIDEBAR

Gay activity: Freddy Lobato spearheaded a recent, daring and successful, campaign for gay rights. Homosexuality was punishable by prison before 1997, when a new President pushed for reforms and encouraged groups to rally for their passage. "Gay rights was a major factor in his reform package," says Lobato. "Volunteers like me made a campaign, held press conferences. For our first Gay Pride Parade in Quito in 1997, 20 people participated. This year, 2,000. Today civil unions are legal and discrimination of any sort is illegal," he's happy to report. "We've now got our own political party—Equal Rights—and had seven candidates in 2009, one of whom was elected as an alternate."

Freddy's favorite clubs:

Balzac: disco for the younger crowd
Black Swan: higher-end disco; drag nights
Hueco: entry-level, lower-class disco
Magenta: tropical theme, middle-class clubsters

Favorite Bars (more popular, he indicates):

Buddha: very young, teen night; no admission charge, New Apollo, Bamboo, Ginete



(Opposite page) Handicrafts in Otovaca; (This page, clockwise from top left) Locro soup - the national dish with egg & avocado. Photos by Carla Waldemar.



Bringing Home Some Love

FROM POUND-BOUND to purebred, cats and dogs are mankind's best friends. Canines and felines vary in shape, size, color, and energy level, not to mention personality. No matter who you are, you can find a furry companion to fill a place in your heart and home.

"It was in the 1700s that the new American and European middle class families could enjoy the companionship of non-working animals," said Layla Buedel, owner of City Pets Minneapolis, a local dog care service. "Until then, it was a luxury of royalty. It was expensive to have additional animals to feed."

Today the marketplace indulges every whim from affordable pets from shelters like the Animal Humane Society to those in pursuit of the ideal blood line from a specialized breeder. If going the breeder route, find one who specializes in one specific breed of animal, like renowned breeder Deb Phillips of Signature Weimaraners in Minneapolis. "Someone who is concentrating on one type of dog is more likely to be more knowledgeable and have the dogs' best interest in mind," she said. It's also a good way to avoid supporting so-called puppy-mills.

Once you have made a connection with an animal and the adoption is final, the lists of supplies and services have just begun. Big-box pet stores as well as unique boutiques like UrbAnimal on Lyndale and Bone Adventure on East Hennepin in Minneapolis help put your signature on pet ownership. Food dishes, collars, tags and toys ... a plethora of options await the pet owner.

A balanced nutritional food is as important to your pets as regular vet visits and frequent grooming. Look for the seal of the AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) on all pet food packaging. If it has been through animal feeding tests, it is tested on animals—and in this case, that is a good thing. It means the food went through studies with real animals for at least six months to see if they nutritional benefits are actually there and not just assumed. The word "formulated" in the AAFCO seal means the food has been tested in a lab for balanced nutrition.



Puss Puss, a rescue cat who lives with the authors. Photo by Sean Ryan

Unfortunately, as our pets age, we are faced with the grave decision to let them go. Toward the end of a loved one's life, the one service we value most is in-home house call when it's time to say goodbye. A compassionate in-home euthanasia service can make the transition easier on both you and your pet. Letting a loved one go in the comfort of their home is by far the best way.

Our pets are integral to our loves. Cats and dogs (and many other assorted creatures) enrich us and fill our home with joy. The title "man's best friend" could and probably should be revised to "mankind's chosen family." □

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RESCUE SPOTLIGHT | Andy Lien



PET PROJECT RESCUE is a no-kill, 501(c)(3) non-profit rescue which places homeless animals in foster care homes until they are adopted by their forever families. Based in Minneapolis, Pet Project Rescue includes cats and dogs from the surrounding area but was started in response to the needs of street dogs on Isla Mujeres, Mexico. Many of these dogs have no homes and live in desperate conditions, where they have to fight to stay alive. Isla Pet Volunteers gather the dogs and cats that run stray in the streets and give them foster care and vet attention prior to flying them to Minnesota where they are fostered and found forever homes by Pet Project Rescue. Recently, the ratio of pets from the local community (from local animal control and puppy mills) to the pets from Mexico has become approximately 50/50 due to the rising need of no-kill rescue resources here in Minnesota. Pet Project Rescue is a volunteer-based rescue so all adoption fees and donations go back into the program to help save more cats and dogs that are in need. ▣

All photography is by Sarah Ernhart of Sarah Beth Photography. Sarah features a different rescue organization every month on her website. Read more about Pet Project Rescue at www.petprojectrescue.com and see more frivolous photos of animals from rescue organizations at www.sarahbethphotography.com.



Downtown Doggies Delight in metro dogs



AMY ROSENTHAL knows how downtown doggies deserve to be treated. As the owner of Metro Dogs, the newly opened dog daycare and boarding facility located in the heart of downtown Minneapolis, Rosenthal is passionate about providing personalized care for every furry friend that runs through her doors. Her excitement can hardly be contained as she exclaims, “I have a love of dogs right down in my bones!”

Since November 2011, Metro Dogs has provided a safe, clean, and secure place for dogs whose owners live and work downtown. With top-notch security systems, innovative cleaning processes, and flexible hours, it’s obvious why professionals and urban dwellers entrust their dogs to Rosenthal’s care.

Rosenthal’s dedication to cleanliness led her to spend several months researching exactly how to make Metro Dogs a state-of-the-art facility. Polyurethane flooring was chosen for its easy clean-up, and disinfectant hoses suspended from the ceiling allow for immediate cleaning action. An air-exchange system circulates smelly air out and clean air in, keeping the facility smelling fresh and clean. The facility is kept so clean, in fact, that “you could eat off the floor here...well, almost.”

The daycare area allows dogs to play together based on their individual temperaments and play styles. Dogs love the playground

equipment, toys, and cots that are available for their use. But it’s not all play at Metro Dogs; “Mind Your Manners” lessons are given free of charge, and all pups have a mandatory nap time in order to refresh and rejuvenate.

If you’re like Rosenthal and love your dog “more than anything in the world,” don’t worry about going through separation anxiety while you are separated from your beloved canine. The playrooms are equipped with web cams so “when you’re at home or at your job (don’t tell your boss) you can waste time looking at your dog and see what the action is like on the Metro Dogs play floor.” Talk about providing owners with peace of mind.

Metro Dogs’ boarding services allow dog owners to not worry about the care of their animals while away. Each kennel is equipped with privacy panels and a cot to keep the dogs stress-free and relaxed. Dogs that are boarded get to participate in daycare activities and receive unlimited love from the staff members. Rosenthal is truly dedicated to making the boarding experience a positive one, and she returns to the building every night after midnight in order to personally take each dog outside for potty rounds. Since the business opened, she’s never missed a night. “That way your dog is attended to 24/7.”

Many other services are provided at Metro Dogs, including free community information





Photos by Sarah Ernhart of Sarah Beth Photography

sessions, grooming services that are currently expanding, and free playtime sessions for service animals. Rosenthal's connections to non-profit animal organizations are direct proof of her love for animals.

Amy Rosenthal can't keep her passion for her business a secret. "Have you ever in your life wished that you could do something that would just make you so happy that your heart would burst? That's how I felt about opening Metro Dogs. Because I had a corporate career going for 30 years, and although I was successful in that, I knew that my heart belonged elsewhere. It was with the dogs."

And Twin Cities dogs are sure lucky to have captured the heart of Amy Rosenthal. ■








THE BEST *Goodbye*



Erin Hennessey had been looking for a golden retriever for several months when she finally met a gentle soul named Sadie. “It was love at first sight. I wanted a golden my whole life, and when I saw her, I knew she was the right one,” Hennessey begins. “You’d never know that the beginning of her life wasn’t perfect. She was so full of excitement and love and joy.” Six and a half year old Sadie spent her next two years happily part of the family, along with Kevin Hennessey, Erin’s husband, and a cockapoo named Trixie.

One day Sadie stopped eating, and a trip to the vet revealed that she had a mast cell tumor that had spread to her blood. The diagnosis was terminal. Chemo would be very unpleasant for Sadie, but would allow her to live for three more weeks, as opposed to one week of relative comfort. “We made the decision to let her go naturally. We just didn’t want to put her through any more pain,” states Hennessey.

Hennessey immediately reached out to Dr. Karen Randall of Solace Veterinary Hospice, who provides in-home care to pets with terminal illness or chronic conditions. Although some vets would have immediately offered to euthanize Sadie, Randall found that Sadie’s pain could be managed with medication, and giving her one good 



Erin and the gentle soul named Sadie. Photo by Sarah Ernhart, Sarah Beth Photography

ALTHOUGH SOME VETS WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY OFFERED TO EUTHANIZE SADIE, RANDALL FOUND THAT SADIE'S PAIN COULD BE MANAGED WITH MEDICATION, AND GIVING HER ONE GOOD LAST WEEK ALLOWED HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO SAY GOODBYE.

last week allowed her family and friends to say goodbye.

Randall explains, "Generally I deal with pets with a terminal illness when a client has either made a decision to not pursue treatment, or there isn't treatment, or treatment has worked for a while and has failed. They have come to terms with the fact that their pet's days are numbered, and for so many families, they want to minimize hospitalization and visits to the vet, and taking their pets to a place where there can be a lot of anxiety. So to be able to provide care in the home can be a really wonderful experience for the patient and also for the families that are caring for them."

Moreover, hospice care can have quite a significant impact on a pet's quality of life. Randall says, "Many times I come in and see pets because their owners are considering euthanasia because their problems are affecting the quality of life so much. We do what we can for pain management, and change the environment. Some of the animals I saw in the spring of last year are still thriving in their homes."

Hennessey also called photographer Sarah Ernhart of Sarah Beth Photography. Ernhart specializes in pet photography (her work is featured throughout this issue), and was inspired by the deep relationship a client had with her service dog, Joy. After capturing some of their last moments together, Ernhart decided to offer what she now calls "Joy Sessions" at a reduced rate to other pet owners whose pets who will soon be passing. Ernhart states, "It's not something that you might think about doing. But I've had almost every single Joy client come back and say how grateful they are to have these photos, and how helpful it's been with the grieving process."

Ernhart is often booked months out, but she makes time for Joy Sessions when they are needed. It's always helpful if you can schedule them in advance, espe- ➔

Continued on page 44

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Joy Session with a dear cat, Kiki. Photo by Sarah Ernhart, Sarah Beth Photography

cially when your pet is feeling more like their normal selves, but not every client has that option, and Ernhart understands that. Her sessions are individualized, and often focus on a pet's favorite things and places to go, and showcasing the strong bond between pet and owner. "One dog loved Chicken McNuggets, so we went to McDonalds, and I got a picture of the dog sticking his head out of the car at McDonalds," Ernhart recalls.

After Sadie's Joy Session, Randall came to help her pass without any pain. Hennessey remembers, "We spent some time saying goodbye, maybe about half an hour, saying how much I loved her and the story of how I found her. I told her what a good girl she was, and my favorite memories. Then we sedated her, and Karen gave her something to stop her heart. And I held Sadie for about an hour when she was gone... it was the perfect goodbye. There was nothing left unsaid."

The passing of a beloved friend is never easy, but there are also beautiful ways to honor their physical bodies that offer more to a grieving owner than what's usually available through a veterinary clinic. Just last fall, husband and wife team Skip Wyland and Carol Noren founded Pets Remembered, which provides a more sensitive approach to pet cremation. Noren says, "We cremate pets one at a time, and we typically offer a 24 hour turnaround... so people can have their ashes returned immediately, and we offer personalized service. Skip's background was as a funeral director. I was a pastor for many years and a hospice chaplain." She adds, "We offer pickup and delivery, but for those ➔

Continued on page 46



Urns from Pets Remembered. Photos by Hubert Bonnet



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Berit enjoyed her last morning in her beloved Lake Calhoun for her Joy Session. It was a grey day which was apparently very "Berit" weather. Photos by Sarah Ernhart, Sarah Beth Photography.

who come to our place, we...enjoy sitting around the table and having coffee, and having people tell us about their pet. That's part of the process is to share memories."

Pets Remembered has an open door policy, is available even on the weekends, and allows owners to bring their pet in and say goodbye in private. And while it is common practice elsewhere to charge pet owners, rather insensitively, by the pound, Pets Remembered offers a standard, reasonable rate that includes a beautifully carved urn. Wyland and Noren are also adding more personal remembrances, including garden markers, wind chimes and urns made by local artists, and they are happy to donate any remaining medicines and food to be repurposed at Paws for a Cause, a shelter serving animals in the five state area.

Nothing can take away a pet owner's grief, nor should it. "The pain is just a reflection of the love," Hennessey states. But giving your pet a beautiful and graceful end to life can help you feel that your journey together was complete. She concludes, "It can be a very peaceful goodbye. It's part of life. It's natural, but it was beautiful that I had the resources to give her a proper goodbye." ■

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SLICE |

Zoë François Continued from page 24

She was coaxed back into the kitchen by her friend Chef Steven Brown. "He is the only person I would even consider getting back into the kitchen for," she laughs.

When Brown was creating his newest restaurant, he asked Zoë to try out a couple of desserts. They were comforting foods with balanced sweetness, like the ethereal butterscotch pot de crème, topped with crème fraîche. Decadent, but so light in texture, that the tiny spoon plunges into the cup time and time again, until it clangs against the empty bottom.

The Linden Hills restaurant was an overnight dining destination.

Because of her crazy schedule, François is quick to point out that the desserts are a team effort. She comes into Tilia to discuss and then their talented staff executes them.

When not traveling on book tours, writing recipes, consulting, or spending time with her family, she still manages to find time to blog. Her award blog Zoë Bakes (recognized by Savuer) walks readers through creating stunning desserts with drool-inducing photography and her girlfriend-next-door encouragement.

It's almost as though there's nothing she can't do with a whisk and a wisp of sugar.

Michelle Gayer Continued from page 28

out opening a bakery, without having to invest all the capital. For two years she ran the bakery, dazzling the city with her bread and pastries, but slowly became mired in the office work. It was her first job that ever involved a desk, a difficult transition for anyone creative.

She was again ready to make a leap. After being pursued by Midtown Global Market, they courted her with the promise of a space, grants, leaving her an investment that wouldn't put her in hock for the rest of her life. Thus, the Salty Tart was born.

When asked what's next for, she says she dreams of taking her bakery to a storefront location, somewhere sweet with meal options and wine. A vision of delicate bubbles next to those confections is a sweet dream, indeed. ▣



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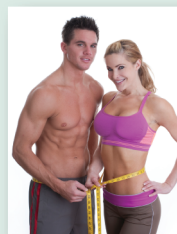
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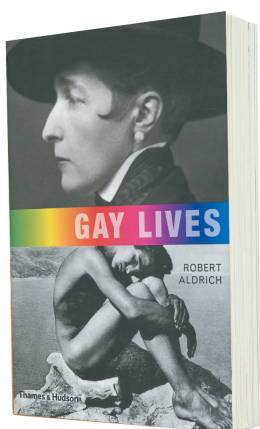
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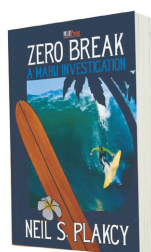
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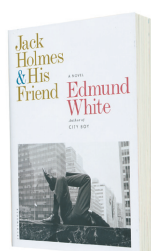
Gay Lives
Robert Aldrich
Thames & Hudson
\$29.95

Aldrich's portraits span centuries and cover the countries of the world. He includes, of course, many of the usual suspects, but has in addition mined a rich vein of the lesser-known. Photographer Claude Cahun, née Lucy Mathilde Renée Schowb in 1894; those "Ladies of Llangollen," or Eleanor Butler (1739-1829) and partner Sarah Ponsonby (1755-1831). The biographies are literate and informative, grouped in accessible subsections: "Love in the Levant"; "Entanglements of Sex and Politics"; "Visions of Male Beauty"; and "International Live in the Modern Era." There are 128 illustrations, 56 in color. Professor of European History, at the University of Sydney, Aldrich is author of *Colonialism and Homosexuality* and editor of *Gay Life and Culture: A World History*. Highly recommended, for reference or plain, enjoyable reading.



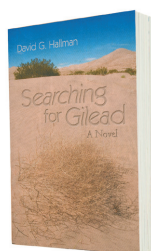
Zero Break: A Mahu Investigation
Neil S. Plakcy
MLR Press
\$14.95

Plakcy's sixth novel finds Honolulu homicide detective Kimo Kanapa'aka and partner investigating a brutal stabbing. Was the young mother's death the result of a home invasion robbery gone wrong, or does the sheer violence indicate something more? They find her toddlers safe with the slain woman's ex, and discover an old acquaintance to be the sperm donor. Parenthood moves beneath the story like the ceaseless waves wash upon the island's shores- an undercurrent that is affecting Kimo and his own partner, fire investigator Mike Riccardi. Everywhere Kimo looks there are parents with kids, couples trying to have kids, and the nagging question—are kids in their future? Adroitly placed investigative lines reel in the killer, but the baby question abides, awaiting volume seven.



Jack Holmes and His Friend
Edmund White
Bloomsbury
\$26.00

Jack Holmes in the early Sixties is a young Midwestern WASP, denied Harvard by his father who'll only pay for Midwestern education. Graduated, Jack lands in Greenwich Village on the arty *Northern Review*. Still reluctant to admit he's attracted to men, he has only single encounters, with comments on his generous endowment. But his friend, Will, has all the coveted Eastern creds, accents, and moves. Jack's in love with Will. This first, more engaging section is narrated from Jack's point of view; midstream, White switches to a later time (they're now 32) narrated from Will's point of view and immersed in Will's married, heterosexual world. The two reconnect, and the reader is left with the message that gay or straight, pretty much everyone's desires are unrequited.



Searching for Gilead
David Hallman
iUniverse
\$21.95

Opening in 1976, *Gilead* follows the book's two protagonists and instantaneous lovers, Tom Fischer and Jonathan Compton, through to 2010. Tom and Jonathan are a couple, and, as couples will, they enmesh their families with them. One side of the clan touts big business, the other missionary service in foreign countries. Hallman knows his subject. Working 30 years for environmental ethics through the United Church of Canada and the World Council of Churches, and maintaining a thirty-three year relationship with his partner, whose last weeks he chronicled in his memoir, *August Farewell*, Hallman deftly captures the ongoing maelstrom of emotions of family relationships, weaving them into realistic plots and dialogue attempting to address his questions concerning "God, injustice, love, the environment, the arts, and death."



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UK Christian Hotel Owners Lose Gay Couple Appeal

The BBC reports that the owners of a B&B in the UK have lost their appeal against ruling that found they acted unlawfully by turning away a gay couple. Peter and Hazelmery Bull had argued their Christian beliefs exempted them from equality legislation, but the court rejected their challenge.

Court Rules Prop. 8 Gay Marriage Ban Unconstitutional

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down California's Prop. 8, the statewide ban on same-sex marriage. The 2-1 decision by the three judge panel found the ballot measure violated the U.S. Constitution. In its decision, the court said, "Proposition 8 served no purpose, and had no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California." Supporters of Prop 8 have promised to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Washington Governor Signs Gay Marriage Bill

The Associated Press reports that Washington's Democratic Governor, Chris Gregoire, signed historic legislation in February, legalizing same-sex marriage in the state. Gregoire's signature makes Washington state the seventh in the U.S. to allow gay couples to wed. The law is scheduled to

take effect June 7th. Opponents of the legislation have vowed to force a referendum in November and plan to file a petition in the meantime that would put the law on hold until after the election.

Des Moines Church is Site of Gay Rights Protest

The Des Moines Register reports that more than 100 people protested outside a church in February in support of the GLBT community. The group was protesting a sign the church erected saying "Gay is not okay." While the group protested, Rev. Michael Demastus gave a sermon inside the church addressing the protest, saying "You cannot be God-fearing and disobey God at the same time."

New Jersey Senate Approves Gay Marriage; Veto Looms

Reuters reports that New Jersey's Democratic-controlled state senate approved same-sex marriage legislation in

February, in spite of Republican Governor Chris Christie's promise to veto the measure. The state Assembly was expected to pass the measure, then send it to the governor. The state legislature is unlikely to have the two-thirds majority necessary to overturn a veto.

Fargo Gay Couple Refused Marriage License

The Associated Press reports that a gay couple in Fargo, North Dakota went to a county courthouse in February to apply for a marriage license. They were refused a license, based on the state's constitution which bans same-sex marriage. Lenny Tweeden and Wayne Rosell have been together for 25 years.

Atlanta Police ID 3rd Man in Anti-Gay Beating

The Atlanta Journal Constitution reports that Atlanta police have identified a third man alleged to have beaten a 20 year old gay man in February while yelling

anti-gay slurs at him. Video of the beating made its way to the Internet. Police Chief George Turner told reporters that the first two men have already been identified and arrest warrants were being sought.

Uganda Anti-Gay Bill 'Not Backed by Government'

The BBC reports that Uganda's government says it does not officially support the anti-gay bill recently re-introduced in Parliament. M.P. David Bahati who supports the bill, said the death penalty would be removed from the legislation. Foreign governments continue to criticize the legislation, but Bahati says they should understand cultural attitudes in Africa are "very different."

Roland Martin to Meet with GLAAD

Former CNN analyst Roland Martin, who was suspended in February after anti-gay comments he made on Twitter during the Super Bowl, announced he would meet with the GLAAD. "I look forward to meeting with GLAAD in the near future and having a productive dialogue." GLAAD issued a statement saying, in part, "We look forward to hearing from CNN and Roland Martin to discuss how we can work together as allies and achieve our common goal of reducing anti-LGBT violence as well as the language that contributes to it."

Pastor Calls for Nationwide Starbucks Boycott Over Gay Marriage

KING-5 news reports that Pastor Steven Andrew of U.S.A. Christian Ministries is calling for a nationwide boycott of Starbucks after the company announced its support of same-sex marriage legislation in Washington state. Andrew wrote a post online called, "Christians Boycott Starbucks - Because Romans 1 Explains Starbucks Hates God." Starbucks is one of more than 100 companies who supported the legislation. □



Sow! Can You Seed?

BY THIS time every winter, green-starved gardeners pacify their days with high hopes and visions of their ideal garden come Spring. Our mailboxes and computer screens are filled with plant porn in the form of seed catalogs and garden magazines promising nothing less than pure garden Nirvana if you choose their seeds. But buyer beware! The power of the air brush and printed word can lure us into impulse seed purchases that we may not be able to fully commit to or find homes for. Plus, sometimes the latest and greatest just doesn't measure up the hype. Most of the consumer seed packets purchased in the US are never planted because of this "eyes bigger than our stomach" mentality. Don't be part of this statistic. Follow these words of wisdom to ensure success with seeds.

Just like a good recipe, the key to success is following the directions to ensure things turn out just right. Seeds are no different, so use the directions on the packet as a guide. The packet will also include cultural and care tips helpful for starting, and later placing and growing your plants outdoors. Quality ingredients will affect the outcome. Always buy good seed from a reputable seed company or a garden center you trust that has edited the varieties to those that do the very best in our area. If seeding indoors, use a sterile seed starting mix. Plant the seeds at the depth recommended on the packet. Water and lightly cover the soil with plastic to keep soil moisture high during germination, then remove the cover as soon as you notice that your seeds have sprouted. At that time move to a very sunny window or under grow lights. Keep your seedlings moist, but not wet, allowing the soil to barely dry between watering. You might be tempted to start your seeds early, but don't do it. They will germinate, but will usually get too leggy and weak by the time outdoor soil and air temperatures are warm enough for transplant. Trust me, follow the recipe for best results.

Choosing which seeds to sow versus which varieties you will purchase in plant form can be determined by how much time, energy, and patience you want to put into your self-seeding mission. Utilize the experts at the garden center to help choose the varieties that are best for you. Start with the varieties easiest from seed, then add varieties depending on how much space, effort, and time you have left to devote to your seedlings. Many varieties can be sown directly in the garden with great success, while others need just a few week jumpstart before being planted outdoors. For me, they are the no brainer choices for home seed starting. Vegetables like carrots, peas, beets, beans, radishes, sweet corn, squash, and many salad greens are the very easiest from seed and can be directly sown outside. Don't forget the flowers. Consider easy-from-seed varieties like morning glory, nasturtium, zinnias, sun flowers, sweet peas, hyacinth bean, and marigold. Fussier seeds with long germi-

nation times, those that need scarification, stratification, special lights and temperatures are best left to the professionals. I will also not bother seeding varieties that I might only need a few of. For instance, do you really want or need 25 of the same tomato variety when you could simply purchase 25 *different* tomato varieties from the garden center? We grow thousands of varieties from seed, and believe me, some of them are best left for us to grow for you in our greenhouses.

If you have never tried starting plants from seed, give it a whirl. It is a lot easier than you think. It is a great way to remain connected to your garden while nurturing the new beginnings of the season to come, and sow forth. ◻

Scott Endres is co-owner of Tangletown Gardens and Tangletown's Wise Acre Eatery on 54th and Nicollet in South Minneapolis.



Photo Courtesy of Tangletown Gardens.

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Against the Amendment: Faith Leaders

THE EFFORT to defeat the anti-marriage amendment is strong and reaches communities of faith across Minnesota. This week, we asked faith leaders to tell us what inspires them to oppose the amendment.

When I think about why my Christian faith leads me to oppose this constitutional amendment, two images come to mind. First, Moses standing before the burning bush; second, Jesus proclaiming the kingdom of God.

At the burning bush, Moses hears not only the name of God, but also the promise that God will liberate the children of Israel. God promises to be there for them, for always. This promise unfolds throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

Later, the Gospel of Matthew declares that Jesus embodies precisely this characteristic of God. He calls Jesus *Emmanuel*, “God with us,” and he records Jesus’ final words of promise: “I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.” As a whole, the Gospels portray Jesus’ ministry—from parables and teachings, to miracles and table fellowship—as a life determined to make that promised presence both tangibly real and unmistakably gracious.

At the center of the biblical story is a God whose defining feature is promised faithfulness. This is precisely what makes a marriage: *the promise to be there for another person, for always.*

I want Minnesota to respect and honor those who make a solemn promise of faithfulness to another person. Such promises strengthen the fabric of community for us all. As a person of faith, I recognize in these promises an echo of the very nature of God. And that leads me to oppose the amendment all the more.

David R. Weiss is an author and lifelong Lutheran. Learn more at www.tothetune.com

The Catholic Church’s rich tradition of social justice is what leads me to oppose the marriage amendment. Throughout history there are many examples of Catholics – including bishops – powerfully speaking out on issues such as racism and immigrant rights. Traditionally, such speaking out has sought to reduce discrimination and expand the circle of inclusion in our society. Yet this is not the case with the Minnesota bishops’ current activism around marriage equality, who are advocating the exact opposite.

For many Catholics this is a blatant and grievous betrayal – not only of Catholicism’s rich social justice tradition, but of the very way of being Catholic in the world. This “way” reflects the way of Jesus, and is not about unquestioning obedience to the church hierarchy but about discerning and celebrating God’s presence in the lives and experiences of all. Bishops have forgotten this hallmark of the faith, but the Catholic people have not. It’s not surprising that credible polls show the majority of Catholics are supportive of civil rights for gay people – including civil marriage rights. Such support reflects the Catholic faith’s emphasis on compassion, justice, family, truth-telling and love. Like people of faith from a range of religious traditions, Catholics have witnessed these qualities and values in the lives and relationships of LGBT people. Our challenge now is to go out and share with others what we’ve witnessed. Such sharing will contribute greatly to the defeat of the amendment.

Michael Bayly is an author, and the executive coordinator of Catholics for Marriage Equality MN. Learn more at c4me.org.

The teachings of Jewish tradition compel me as a Jew to vote “no” on the constitutional amendment to define marriage.

The Torah (Jewish Bible) supports the full equality, dignity and acceptance of LG-BTQ people and their families. We learn this from the story of creation which teaches that all people are made *b’tzelem elohim* (in the likeness of God) (Genesis 1:26) and that *lo tov heyot ha’adam levado* (it is not good for a human being to be alone) (Genesis 2:18).

As a Jew, I know that members of my faith have experienced discrimination and violence. As a person of faith, I cannot remain silent in the face of the oppression of anyone. We can learn from the prophets who spoke out against the wrongs they saw being committed around them. We have the imperative: *Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof* (Justice, justice shall you pursue) (Deuteronomy 16:20) to speak out against injustice in order to participate in *Tikkun Olam* (the repair of the world).

In my office I have a picture with the words from Rabbi Hillel “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now when.” (*Pirke Avot* the Says of the Ancestors 1:14). As people of faith, we must speak out against this amendment for ourselves, for our friends and family, and we must speak out now! □

Rabbi Melissa B. Simon is the Director of Lifelong Learning at Shir Tikvah in south Minneapolis.



My Days Among the Super Rich, Part 2

(In our last episode, I traded all my air miles to spend a few nights in one of the most exclusive hotels in New York City. Below are lessons learned about the very rich during my stay.)

When I was in New York, the Wall Street protests were at their height. I wandered downtown from my cushy hotel on the Upper East Side, took one look at the gaggle of raggedy hippies shouting their nonsensical demands in the direction of the New York Stock Exchange, and proclaimed them idiots.

First off, their main demand—that Wall Street be shut down—is just stupid and impossible. And, secondly, is there any rule against taking a shower before hitting the streets to protest “The Man”? Honestly; people would take them more seriously if they occasionally washed their hair.

If the protesters are truly interested in controlling the rich, they should hop on the No. 6 train and go Uptown to see how it’s done. It is there, in the few block radius where the 1% live and play, where the super-rich are neatly oppressed by the working class.

What I learned from my brief stay in that gold-gilt echelon is that the secret to controlling the rich is to treat them like naughty children.

Everywhere we went on the Upper East Side, the service class treated the rich with ruthless disregard. And, amazingly, the rich seemed to love it. At the hotel, I witnessed dozens of obnoxious, entitled, rich guys approach the staff with outrageous demands, only to be treated with a shrug of indifference. One puffy business titan stormed the concierge and demanded a coffee maker be brought to his \$2000 per night room. The concierge glanced at him coolly. “A coffee maker?” he said, cocking his head as if trying to pronounce a difficult foreign phrase. “We have 24-hour room service. You don’t need one.”

I waited with anticipation for the self-important businessman to blow, but instead, he deflated, apologized, and scurried away.

“How did you do that?” I asked in amazement.

“It’s easy,” the concierge said. “They were all raised by nannies. You treat them like you’re their nanny and they behave.” The philosophy carried over to the famous bar in the hotel. Its walls were decorated by a famous children’s book illustrator. “It’s like a nursery for alcoholics,” I exclaimed as we sank into our cradle-like booth and sipped our \$20 cocktails that the ancient bartender had delivered with a snarl.

“You don’t want wine,” he said, waving off my original drink request. “I’ll make you something and you’ll drink it.”

This charming attitude of benign hostility extended beyond the hotel to the shops in the neighborhood. Workers regularly slapped the hands of the rich as if they were greedy children reaching for a cookie. I witnessed pharmacists screaming at customers to stop fondling merchandise; dog walkers scolding their charges’ masters for imagined slights; and a group of young matrons plotting how to disobey the orders of their children’s nannies, only to agree in rueful resignation that they had no recourse but to do as they were told. One afternoon, while waiting for an elevator in the hotel (one of the last places where elevator operators are still employed), an older woman approached me and asked me to help her open the door of her awesome suite that took up half the floor.

As she thanked me, she said, “Please do not tell my bodyguards that I asked a stranger to help me enter my room. They are at lunch and I promised not to leave my room until they return.”

“Bodyguards?” I asked in delight. “I didn’t know this hotel was under attack.”

She clutched my wrist meaningfully and said in a frightened whisper, “Always.” □



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**Dear Ms. Behavior:**

I am a 54-year-old nurse and the mother of a lesbian. I suspect lesbianism runs in my family. I have a sister who is gay, and two "spinster" aunts on my mother's side who are almost certainly gay. When I was in my 20s I had an intense love affair for two years with a woman, and when we parted it broke my heart. That was the only time the "gay question" came up for me.

For the past few months at work, Genevieve, a lesbian nurse in her late 40's, has been flirting with me. She is sexy and beautiful and awakening memories I thought I'd left far behind. I feel like I may be falling in love again. In a less passionate way, I also love my husband, and our sex life is decent. But now I'm wondering about my own "true" sexuality given my possible biological predisposition and new feelings for Genevieve.

I understand that a gene for homosexuality has not been discovered. But was I, like my daughter, born gay? Have I been living a lie? And if so, at my age and after almost 30 years of marriage, is it worth breaking my marital vows, risking losing my husband and turning my life upside down in order to explore this issue and uncover the truth?

-GENES DON'T LIE

Dear Genes don't lie:

Don't make life-changing decisions based only on counting the queer fruit on your family tree.

Maybe your early heartbreak caused you to try to suppress your lesbian inclinations, but if the "gay question" hasn't come up for 30

years, you probably haven't been living a lie. If your marriage is relatively happy, perhaps you're one of those fluid creatures, capable of falling in love with a person of either gender.

Ms. Behavior would not encourage you to ignore your feelings just to avoid making a mess, but she also wouldn't urge you to haphazardly excavate your unexamined feelings. Now that you've raised the question, you won't forget or ignore it. If there's a "truth" you're not facing, you'll know it over time.

Beside the issue of sexual orientation is the question of attraction to someone else. People in committed relationships are sometimes powerfully drawn to other people. Anyone, queer or hetero, could face similar issues after decades of marriage, upon meeting someone attractive. You'll need to sort out what, if anything, you want to do about these feelings, in relation to your longstanding commitment. Sort it out with friends, a therapist, or your humongous gay family.

Dear Ms. Behavior:

I'm in bed with my luscious girlfriend Betty, rolling around. We're kissing and touching, and things are heating up. The phone rings. I think it's a work call – I'm a consultant and work from home – so I leap out of bed to answer it. It's only my friend Susan, who's having yet another crisis about a girl. I say, "Can I call you back in five minutes?"

I slither back to bed, and explain that Susan is having a crisis and I have to talk to her. But

Betty is miffed, so she rolls over and plays dead. I leave the room to call Susan back and of course it's a dumb non-urgent problem. I come back to bed with my best sultry look and apologize for having taken the call, but now Betty says she doesn't want to have sex with me today or tomorrow or maybe ever. Am I the biggest jerk in the world or is Betty overreacting?

-VERONICA

Dear Veronica:

Can't you pretend you're busy consulting (you sort of are, right?) and turn the ringer off for an hour?

God invented Caller ID for a reason. If it's one of your whiney friends, call them back later. If it's work call, dry your face, muster up a professional tone, and pick up the phone. (Worst case scenario: One of your mothers calls and says something hideous, costing you and your girlfriend an extra therapy session or two.)

Once you tell Betty the new plan, hopefully she'll forgive you. A little breach of sexual/telephone etiquette is unlikely to permanently disintegrate anyone's delicate libido. But if Betty's anger continues to disrupt her desire, maybe you can help her design an appropriate faux punishment for you, to even the score. □

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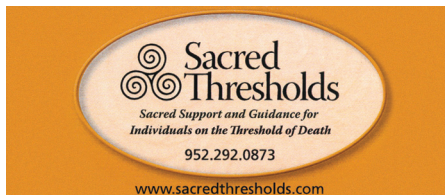
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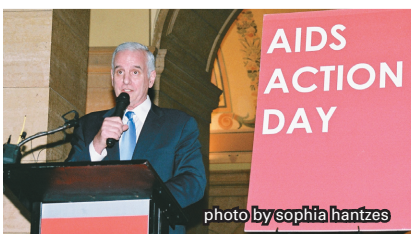


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This is Jeffrey. He just sat down to read. To take in the smell of worn books. To people watch. To find beside his chair a notebook. To open it and find messy notes on eighteenth century literature. To find a name to type into Facebook to return the notes to their proper owner...

JEFF (13:00): hey, i think i found your notebook at the library. black spiral-bound Five Star?

JOEL (15:00): omg ty! yes, that's mine. major lit test coming up. where should i find you to pick it up?

JEFF (15:30): i'll be at the library for an other thirty mins or so. here?

JOEL (15:30): on my way.

And to Jeffrey, Joel is cute. And to Joel, Jeffrey is, too. So Joel, with only thirty minutes left and a ten minute walk in front of him, takes a shower. He shaves. Brushes his teeth. Changes into an outfit a little more revealing—a polo to emphasize his arms. He walks to the library smelling himself, wishing he put on more cologne. (No, no. Less is always better. Right?) He listens to music on

his iPod to pump him up, and arrives at the library with a minute to spare.

Jeffrey, who has been damning himself for not wearing something cuter today, has just had the most unproductive thirty minutes of his life. He's texted his girlfriends, giddy about the cute boy about to retrieve his notebook. His handwriting is sexy, Jeffrey decides. It's... chicken-scratch meets circles-for-Os. Jeffrey's scoured Joel's Facebook, too. They have mutual friends. GAY mutual friends; could this mean Joel is gay, too? The butterflies are explosive.

It's all leading up to this moment: when Joel spots Jeffrey sitting in his chair, pretending to read a textbook. Joel swallows his heart and Jeffrey sees him from the corner of his eye, but does not move. Noticing him too soon will make for an awkward exchange.

Jeffrey reads and re-reads one sentence in his textbook as Joel makes his way. I have pit stains, I know I do, Jeffrey tells himself. And my heart is beating too hard. Can he see it pounding?

Jeffrey takes a deep breath because he knows he's about to have to speak.

Joel lets out the breath he's been holding for twenty seconds—the one he inhaled to calm his racing heart.

Joel is beside Jeffrey, and Jeffrey looks up. Joel opens his mouth and lets out a strange croaking noise that was supposed to be "hello." Face flushed, he clears his throat, and... "Hi. I'm Joel." Jeffrey is as gorgeous as his pictures.

"I'm Jeffrey," he hands Joel his notebook.

Joel is beyond perfect. He'd never be interested in me, Jeffrey reasons.

Awkward silence. Jeffrey looks down at his textbook.

"Ok, well thanks," Joel says.

"Anytime," Jeffrey replies, still looking down. A decision he immediately regrets.

And Joel leaves. He doesn't like me, Joel decides.

This is Joel. He just left the library. He was there to pick up a notebook he left behind. To take in the smell of worn books. To people watch. To procrastinate until the last possible moment.

This is Jeffrey. He just left the library, running. He was there to read. To take in the smell of worn books. To people watch. To find a lost notebook, and almost let loose its owner. To chase him outside and call his name. To swallow his heart and ask for a date.

This is Joel and Jeffrey. They like people watching and the smell of libraries. They text message and use Facebook. And there's nothing particularly special about either one, except that they're romantics, whether they know it or not.

And you may think that they don't exist, but they do. They exist behind every flutter and in every hope.

The difference is in leaving the library. ◻

DeVotchKa & Mychael Danna's "The Winner Is." I bet you've heard it. Go for a listen, will you?
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